

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 240629Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7247
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO RIYADH
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1594

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINS, LE, PLO, MOPS
SUBJ: REMARKS OF SAMIR SABBAGH

1. EMBOFF MET WITH SAMIR SABBAGH FROM AL-MURABITUN ON MARCH 23. (AL-MURABITUN IS MEMBER OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND HAS FIGHTERS IN SOUTH ALONGSIDE PALESTINIANS AS PART OF "JOINT FORCES".) SABBAGH SAID THE FOLLOWING:

2. THE PLO AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT OBJECTED TO THE INCLUSION OF THE FRENCH AND IRANIANS IN UNIFIL, BECAUSE NEITHER THE FRENCH NOR THE IRANIANS WERE NEUTRAL. (SEE BEIRUT 1576 FOR OTHER VIEWS OF SABBAGH ON THE CEASE-FIRE FOR SOUTH LEBANON.)

3. IT WOULD "BE GOOD FOR LEBANESE BUT BAD FOR THE PALESTINIANS" IF SYRIAN ADF FORCES ADVANCED SOUTH TOWARD THE LITANI TO HELP CONTROL PALESTINIAN ACTIVITIES.
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THE PALESTINIANS WOULD CERTAINLY OPPOSE SUCH A MOVE. THE ARAB STATES, HOWEVER, WERE GETTING FED UP WITH THE PLO, AND IT WAS PERHAPS TIME TO DO AWAY WITH THE PLO. (COMMENT: THIS REMARK IS OUT OF CHARACTER FOR SABBAGH. IT IS THE FIRST TIME HE HAS IN ANY WAY INDICATED TO US DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE PLO.)

4. THE JOINT FORCES (INCLUDING THE PLO) HAD LOST ABOUT 300 PEOPLE KILLED IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ESTIMATED THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD LOST 80 KILLED. THE JOINT FORCES BELIEVED THEY HAD DONE WELL, GIVEN THE OVERWHELMING MILITARY SUPERIORITY OF THE ISRAELIS.

5. THE SITUATION IN WEST BEIRUT WAS EXPLOSIVE. ARMED MEN OF ASIM QANSUH'S PRO-SYRIAN BAATH PARTY AND KAMAL SHATILA'S PRO-SYRIAN UNION OF POPULAR LABOR FORCES WERE PROVOKING TROUBLE. AL MURABITUN FEARED THERE MIGHT BE ARMED INTER-MUSLIM CLASHES IN WEST BEIRUT AS A RESULT. SABBAGH APPEALED TO EMBOFF TO HAVE THE UNITED STATES URGE THE SYRIANS TO PUT THEIR MEN BACK ON THE STREETS IN WEST BEIRUT BEFORE THERE WERE MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. PARKER

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